

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for determining a user affinity for a topic comprising the steps of:  
assigning a category to at least one object, the at least one object comprising at least one topic;  
associating the at least one object with at least one user;  
maintaining a record of actions performed on the at least one object by the at least one user;  
determining a user affinity for the at least one topic based on at least the category and the record of actions.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining a user affinity determines the user affinity by calculating an affinity score for the user's association with the at least one object.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:  
normalizing the affinity score calculated.
4. The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:  
applying a population threshold of a plurality of users to the affinity score.
5. The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of:  
associating a predetermined percentage of the plurality of users with the user affinity for the at least one topic.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one object comprises at least one of an author field, a response to field, a links field, an editors field, and a reading field.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of:

calculating an affinity score for the user's association with the at least one object.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the affinity score is calculated according to a formula of:

$$A * Va + T * Vt + L * Vl + E * Ve + R * Vr;$$

where A is the author field, Va is an author value associated with the author field, T is the response to field, Vt is a response to value associated with the response to field, L is the links field, Vl is a links value associated with the links field, E is the editors field, Ve is an editors value associated with the editors field, R is the reading field, and Vr is a reading value associated with the reading field.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

determining whether the at least one user has performed at least one action on the at least one object.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of:

decaying the user affinity of the at least one user if a determination is made that the at least one user has not performed any actions on the at least one object.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of decaying the user affinity decays at a constant rate.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the constant rate is a predetermined percentage per predetermined period of time.

13. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of:

resetting the user affinity if a determination is made that the at least one user has performed the at least one action on the at least one object.

14. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

enabling a system administrator to decline the user affinity.

15. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

enabling the user to decline the user affinity.

16. A system for determining a user affinity for a topic comprising:

assigning means for assigning a category to at least one object, the at least one object comprising at least one topic;

associating means for associating the at least one object with at least one user;

maintaining means for maintaining a record of actions performed on the at least one object by the at least one user;

determining means for determining a user affinity for the at least one topic based on at least the category and the record of actions.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein the determining means determines the user affinity by calculating an affinity score for the user's association with the at least one object.

18. The system of claim 17, further comprising normalizing means for normalizing the affinity score calculated.

19. The system of claim 18, further comprising applying means for applying a population threshold of a plurality of users to the affinity score.

20. The system of claim 19, further comprising percentage associating means for associating a predetermined percentage of the plurality of users with the user affinity for the at least one topic.

21. The system of claim 16, wherein the at least one object comprises at least one of an author field, a response to field, a links field, an editors field, and a reading field.

22. The system of claim 21, further comprising calculating means for calculating an affinity score for the user's association with the at least one object.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the affinity score is calculated according to a formula of:

$$A * Va + T * Vt + L * Vl + E * Ve + R * Vr;$$

where A is the author field, Va is an author value associated with the author field, T is the response to field, Vt is a response to value associated with the response to field, L is the links field, Vl is a links value associated with the links field, E is the editors field, Ve is an editors value associated with the editors field, R is the reading field, and Vr is a reading value associated with the reading field.

24. The system of claim 16, further comprising action determining means for determining whether the at least one user has performed at least one action on the at least one object.

25. The system of claim 24, further comprising decaying means for decaying the user affinity of the at least one user if a determination is made that the at least one user has not performed any actions on the at least one object.

26. The system of claim 25, wherein the decaying means decays the affinity score at a constant rate.

27. The system of claim 26, wherein the constant rate is a predetermined percentage per predetermined period of time.

28. The system of claim 24, further comprising resetting means for resetting the user affinity if a determination is made that the at least one user has performed the at least one action on the at least one object.

29. The system of claim 16, further comprising declining means for enabling a system administrator to decline the user affinity.

30. The system of claim 16, further comprising declining means for enabling the user to decline the user affinity.

31. A system for determining a user affinity for a topic comprising:  
an assigning module that assigns a category to at least one object, the at least one object comprising at least one topic;

an associating module that associates the at least one object with at least one user;

a maintaining module that maintains a record of actions performed on the at least one object by the at least one user;

a determining module that determines a user affinity for the at least one topic based on at least the category and the record of actions.

32. The system of claim 31, wherein the determining module determines the user affinity by calculating an affinity score for the user's association with the at least one object.

33. The system of claim 32, further comprising a normalizing module that normalizes the affinity score calculated.

34. The system of claim 32, further comprising an applying module that applies a population threshold of a plurality of users to the affinity score.

35. The system of claim 34, further comprising a percentage associating module that associating a predetermined percentage of the plurality of users with the user affinity for the at least one topic.

36. The system of claim 31, wherein the at least one object comprises at least one of an author field, a response to field, a links field, an editors field, and a reading field.

37. The system of claim 36, further comprising a calculating module that calculates an affinity score for the user's association with the at least one object.

38. The system of claim 37, wherein the affinity score is calculated according to a formula of:

$$A * Va + T * Vt + L * Vl + E * Ve + R * Vr;$$

where A is the author field, Va is an author value associated with the author field, T is the response to field, Vt is a response to value associated with the response to field, L is the links field, Vl is a links value associated with the links field, E is the editors field, Ve is an editors value associated with the editors field, R is the reading field, and Vr is a reading value associated with the reading field.

39. The system of claim 31, further comprising an action determining module that determines whether the at least one user has performed at least one action on the at least one object.

40. The system of claim 39, further comprising a decaying module that decays the user affinity of the at least one user if a determination is made that the at least one user has not performed any actions on the at least one object.

41. The system of claim 40, wherein the decaying module decays the affinity score at a constant rate.

42. The system of claim 41, wherein the constant rate is a predetermined percentage per predetermined period of time.

43. The system of claim 39, further comprising a resetting module that resets the user affinity if a determination is made that the at least one user has performed the at least one action on the at least one object.

44. The system of claim 31, further comprising a declining module that enabling a system administrator to decline the user affinity.
45. The system of claim 31, further comprising declining module that enabling the user to decline the user affinity.
46. A processor readable medium comprising processor readable code embodied therein for determining a user affinity for a topic, the medium comprising:
- assigning code that causes a processor to assign a category to at least one object, the at least one object comprising at least one topic;
  - associating code that causes a processor to associate the at least one object with at least one user;
  - maintaining code that causes a processor to maintain a record of actions performed on the at least one object by the at least one user;
  - determining code that causes a processor to determine a user affinity for the at least one topic based on at least the category and the record of actions.
47. The medium of claim 46, wherein the determining code determines the user affinity by calculating an affinity score for the user's association with the at least one object.
48. The medium of claim 47, further comprising normalizing code that causes a processor to normalize the affinity score calculated.
49. The medium of claim 48, further comprising applying code that causes a processor to apply a population threshold of a plurality of users to the affinity score.
50. The medium of claim 49, further comprising percentage associating code that causes a processor to associate a predetermined percentage of the plurality of users with the user affinity for the at least one topic.

51. The medium of claim 46, wherein the at least one object comprises at least one of an author field, a response to field, a links field, an editors field, and a reading field.

52. The medium of claim 51, further comprising calculating code that causes a processor to calculate an affinity score for the user's association with the at least one object.

53. The medium of claim 52, wherein the affinity score is calculated according to a formula of:

$$A * V_a + T * V_t + L * V_l + E * V_e + R * V_r;$$

where A is the author field,  $V_a$  is an author value associated with the author field, T is the response to field,  $V_t$  is a response to value associated with the response to field, L is the links field,  $V_l$  is a links value associated with the links field, E is the editors field,  $V_e$  is an editors value associated with the editors field, R is the reading field, and  $V_r$  is a reading value associated with the reading field.

54. The medium of claim 46, further comprising action determining code that causes a processor to determine whether the at least one user has performed at least one action on the at least one object.

55. The medium of claim 54, further comprising decaying code that causes a processor to decay the user affinity of the at least one user if a determination is made that the at least one user has not performed any actions on the at least one object.

56. The medium of claim 55, wherein the decaying code decays the affinity score at a constant rate.

57. The medium of claim 56, wherein the constant rate is a predetermined percentage per predetermined period of time.



58. The medium of claim 54, further comprising resetting code that causes a processor to reset the user affinity if a determination is made that the at least one user has performed the at least one action on the at least one object.

59. The medium of claim 46, further comprising declining code that causes a processor to enable a system administrator to decline the user affinity.

60. The medium of claim 46, further comprising declining code that causes a processor to enable the user to decline the user affinity.